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This is not the place to inquire what remains for Protestantism in France, since the Revolution of February last, and the long train of calamities, the bloodshed and anarchy, which have followed in its train. But we cannot dismiss the subject without expressing a confident hope, that, when the revolutionary storm which now agitates that ill-fated country shall have passed away, an enlightened form of Christianity will become the leading religion of her people. Catholicism can never again have any real influence on the French nation. Her clergy may live in peace with the present rulers of France, and sing in their churches the *Domine salvam fac rempublicam*, as six months since they sang, *Domine salvum fac regem*; but between democratic France and Catholicism there can never be any serious, any sincere union. Protestantism, that is to say, a religion founded in liberty of thought, can alone harmonize with free institutions. The Revolution of 1848, notwithstanding the many evils which have resulted from it, will have one good effect. It will have practically demonstrated, that it is not by wild and chimerical schemes of reform, that society can be regenerated; and France, we believe, will understand that in the tranquil but certain progress of religious truth is to be found the only safeguard of a nation.

ART. VIII. — *Prose Writers of Germany*. By FREDERIC H. HEDGE. Illustrated with Portraits. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart. 1848. 8vo. pp. 567.

WE are surprised that some ingenious mind has not carried out, with reference to the intellectual universe, the argument from design, which forms the basis of Paley's Natural Theology. We infer the blended wisdom and benevolence of the Creator from the distribution of land and water, coal, salt, and metals, in such proportions and relations as subserve the convenience and facilitate the industry of man. We might draw the same inference from the relations of demand and supply that can be traced in the native capacities and endowments of mankind. *Non omnia possumus omnes.*

Nascitur, non fit, is the law not of poetical genius alone, but of intellectual and artistical superiority in every department. The power of appreciating and enjoying the creations of others exists in thousands whom no possible training could have made creative or controlling minds. While few are unable to receive pleasure and profit from books, the number of those who are capable of becoming the makers of readable books is comparatively small, and the richest culture and the most refined taste are entirely compatible with an utter incapacity of authorship. The same proportion that exists between born writers and born readers may be traced between the minds capable of a legitimate political ascendancy and influence, as jurists, legislators, or diplomatists, and those who, lacking native, can never possess acquired, ability for public life. This proportion is very little affected by varieties of outward condition. It furnishes as large a representation *pro rata* for the council-fire in the forest as for the parliament or the senate-chamber. When, under democratic institutions, offices that are beyond the needs of the people are created for party purposes, and sought for selfish ends, for lack of candidates who can be fitted for them, they must be filled by men who cannot grow into the capacity to fill them well. When, on the other hand, under arbitrary institutions of government, the places of trust and power that ought to intervene between the supreme authority and the common citizens are left vacant, there is crowded out of its legitimate sphere a large amount of talent which cannot find scope in the humbler walks of industry, and will, from the necessity of its nature, seek posts and modes of influence the nearest possible to those for which the Creator fitted it. These unsphered minds, these potential statesmen and law-makers, are almost always drawn into the literary arena ; and they are too highly endowed to remain unnoticed, yet too far from their true vocation to win success and fame commensurate with their wisdom and ability.

These remarks are verified in German literature, and may aid in the solution of some of the complex problems which it offers. In modern Germany, there has never been a time when administrative and executive talent had an open field for its exercise. Art and authorship have been the only departments of effort which have been free for competition ; and, as the born artist alone can cross the threshold of art,

authorship has occupied, not only its appropriate quota of the German intellect, but very many minds which, under more liberal institutions of government, would have embodied their ideas in constitutions, laws, or treaties. To this fact we are to ascribe the hyper-symmetrical, redundant many-sidedness of German literature. Hence its many sublustrous luminaries of no contemptible magnitude, yet too nebulous to present a definite outline. There are not a few German writers whose eminence is acknowledged rather than recognized, whose fame rests on general belief rather than on individual consciousness, who were rather the lexicographers than the historiographers of their own minds. They had breadth of vision, depth of intuition, large and profound culture, originality of speculation and of fancy ; the Promethean gift alone was wanting. Thus there is a great deal which we feel that we ought to admire, but cannot, — barbless thoughts, unwinged words. For the discriminating criticism of such a literature, the first process ought to be the separation of those who would not have been authors, could they have been any thing else, from those who could have been nothing else. We have no more right to regard the quartos and octavos of vast learning and unfathomable stupidity, which are transferred from the German press to the dustiest shelf in the library, as parts of German literature proper, than a foreigner would have to libel American literature on the score of the less ponderous abortions of our own press which pass into circulation chiefly through the hands of the grocer.

The political condition of Germany accounts, not only for the profuseness of its authorship, but for many of the prominent characteristics of its literature. Its writers have found a wide range of the most obvious subjects tabooed. Not only the institutions of government, but a large part of the distinctions and arrangements of social life, have been under interdict from time immemorial. The workings of autocratic jealousy defy calculation, and one never knows at what point he may come into collision with prejudices and absurdities which help to sustain the pillars of state. Even the novel, in its English and American form, presupposes unlimited freedom of the press ; for in a work of art which has for its object the delineation of persons and things as they are, men must be viewed, incidentally at least, as citizens, no less than as lovers and friends ; and it would be hardly possible for

the novelist to be true to life as it is or has been, with the penalties of constructive treason hanging over every unguarded allusion to government, law, or even natural right. For still stronger reasons, under arbitrary forms of government, must the discussion of all subjects appertaining to the philosophy or economy of social or national existence be precluded, or thrown into the most abstract forms, so that the whole science of practical life will never leave the matrix of metaphysics, in which all its fundamental ideas must have their birth, but in which they cannot have their development. Precisely this has been the case in Germany. Kant, Fichte, and Hegel have been permitted to promulgate their respective formulas of the state and of civic life ; but there has never been a time when an Adam Smith, a Montesquieu, or a Say would have been suffered ground-room. The relations of the ME and the NOT ME have been set forth with the most critical minuteness ; but the joint and mutual relations of any given aggregate of actually existing MEs have been left in unfathomed obscurity. Thus German philosophy has been doubly *transcendental*, transcending, as it has done, the sphere, not only of sensual phenomena, but of ordinary human experience. For lack of a legal settlement on terrestrial soil, it has been driven into cloud-land, or compelled to "lay the beams of its chambers on the waters." Thus, with the utmost precision and exactness both of outline and of detail, it has necessarily seemed inaccessibly misty or profound to the Anglo-Saxon mind, accustomed as it is to a *pedestrian* philosophy, which steps from fact to fact, and leaves its footmarks where they may be seen of all men.

We referred to the necessary influence of arbitrary political institutions on the literature of fiction. This, in Germany, is as meagre in some aspects as it is inexhaustibly rich and indescribably grand in others. We know of no German *novel*, in the more restricted sense of that term. True, there are intellectual autobiographies under the color of fictitious names and incidents, — there are philosophical tales, such as might be made from Plato's or Cicero's Dialogues by passing a slender thread of narrative through them, — there are stories which depict some possible, imaginable, or remotely future condition of things, to which the present offers no parallel. But if there be any instances of the artistical employment of such materials as the existing state of society affords

in the construction of an elaborate and finished fiction, the plot, incidents, and *dénouement* all within the range of conventional probabilities, they at least do not lie within the usual German reading of an American. The consciousness of a restricted range in the region of the actual has, no doubt, been one of the chief reasons why German writers of fiction have retained the use of the supernatural element, notwithstanding the slender hold which, even in its authentic and hallowed forms, it has on the faith of the nation. It must be outward circumstances, and not intellectual tendencies alone, which sustain a vernacular literature, bristling with the outgrown superstitions of all times and lands, among a people whose prevalent theology limits Omnipotence by the narrowest code of general laws, and hides it behind the wheels and within the springs of its own mechanism.

In what we have said, we would not imply that the peculiar direction and tone of German literature have been the result of calculation and deliberate choice. The circumstances to which we refer have educated the national mind, modified its spontaneity, shaped its development. Germany lies within the latitude of the highest genius. Its climate is eminently congenial to the compact and vigorous constitution and healthy temperament of body, most propitious to mental clearness, strength, industry, and enterprise. Its mountains, forests, and rivers are full of the noblest inspiration, and fraught with the most suggestive traditions and remembrances. The nation has inherited from its earliest ancestry traits of the highest intellectual energy, to which, even in its ages of rudeness and barbarism, cultivated Rome was constrained to pay reluctant honor. The collective mind of such a nation could not, in the nature of things, be restrained, suppressed, or dwarfed. It must grow, and, if arrested in its lateral expansion, it must shoot up into regions where it can be free. If its lower branches find no room, the sap which should have nourished them will clothe the topmost boughs with the richer verdure and fruitage. The German intellect is at home in its domain of cloud-land, and unconscious of its *banishment* thither. With the prospect of the largest liberty, it would hesitate to return earthward, so much more of sky-room is there than of ground-room. Its abstractions are realities of its own experience, — phenomena of its own introverted existence. Its habitual action

is so remote from outward and public life, and so entirely made up of thought, as to define to its own clear self-consciousness the most subtle and evanescent metaphysical distinctions, and to render the most highly sublimated philosophy practical and experimental. Nay, it doubtless has, with all its defiant skepticism, a certain subjective, imaginative faith in the fantastic forms with which so much of its fictitious literature swarms. It thus refutes its own unbelief. Because it has reasoned out of existence not only angel and spirit, but even a personal Deity, it re-peoples the void of its own creation with the phantoms of classic and mediæval mythology.

The influence of the Protestant Reformation, also, may be traced throughout the modern literature of Germany. In no other country did the Reformation find free course. In England, it was stopped short at the outset by regal power; or, rather, it never began, but was superseded by political movements, which half yielded and half withheld what the spirit of the age demanded. In Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scotland, the stern and compact logic of Calvinism moulded the doctrines of the early Reformers into a symmetrical system which admitted neither modification nor dissent. Luther, on the other hand, was more the champion of liberty than of a creed. Often inconsistent with himself, he was the hero of a revolution, but could not be the founder of a sect. Though at intervals fiercely intolerant and an unrelenting persecutor, he brooked no intolerance but his own, encouraged both by precept and example the freest style of criticism and investigation, and took the lead in the pursuit of truth, independently of prescription or authority. His enormous waste of zeal and energy on questions of ritual and polity precluded the cogent influence which he might otherwise have had on the dogmatic and spiritual philosophy of the Reformed Church of Germany. The consequence has been a formal union in ceremony and ecclesiastical government under his name, connected from the first with a consciousness of unlimited freedom, and with a tendency to the broadest divergence in all matters of faith. Thus Germany has had no conventional standard of opinion, — no Procrustean bed for the author's experiment in stretching or dwarfing himself, or for public use in case of his failure. Universal toleration has, indeed, given birth to no small amount of

waywardness, absurdity, and impiety ; but it has at the same time been the breath of life to many noble minds, that could not have wrought in chains, — to expositors of the highest truth, whose utterances the crushing tyranny of public opinion would have suppressed.

Literature also derives much of its character from the tastes and habits of its readers. Talk as we may about the spontaneity of genius, the author, almost equally with the orator, has his public before him. While he thinks that his only aim is to utter himself, he unconsciously selects for utterance such portions of his complex self as a goodly number of his contemporaries will be glad to hold communion with. Does he look for readers in the market-place, his excursive powers will feel the rein, — he will pause to verify his theories, — he will seek proofs, illustrations, and metaphors from the objects and events of busy life. The impulse which makes a man an author is social in its very nature ; and, in the act of writing, he cannot but take advantage of known points of sympathy and contact between himself and those who will buy his book. He may, indeed, write for a very restricted *coterie*, as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson have done, in the hope of diffusing among the many the tastes and sentiments of the few ; but only here and there a man of the most audacious mental enterprise has the faith to essay the multiplication of his own public. Nine authors out of ten write for a public already made. Now Germany has for many generations abounded in readers of contemplative and speculative habits. Its populous universities, its numerous æsthetic circles among the titled and the affluent, the remoteness of its literary emporia from the bustle of extensive commerce, the contracted and uninviting arena which it has offered for political ambition, — these and many other circumstances have created an unprecedented amount of curiosity and receptivity on all possible themes of abstract thought and philosophical discussion. Then, again, unlimited freedom and toleration of thought and utterance on all subjects appertaining to the inward life have degenerated into indifference for the truth, — nay, into a pretty prevalent skepticism as to the reality of objective truth, — so that a ready hospitality is offered to whatever is new, strange, or startling, however out of harmony with what the rest of the world may deem established verities.

Consequently, a large part of German literature lacks depth of conviction and seriousness of purpose, and is designed solely to furnish æsthetic recreation and excitement for persons of generous culture and liberal tastes, who use philosophical juggles or pantheistic rhapsodies as a resource against *ennui*. It is undeniable, that, on the gravest subjects of thought, a great deal is written in Germany solely to win the praise of ingenuity and audacity, without belief on the writer's part, or any expectation of commanding it from his readers. Both in theology and philosophy, theories have often been selected for development and elucidation, not because faith in them was within the range of possibility, but because their very untenableness had always kept them in the background, and reserved for these latter days the honor of their first advocacy. This intellectual prize-fighting will continue until the political and social system is so modified as to replace the superfluous literary dilettantism by a serious interest in the affairs of actual life. So long as there are swarming groups of eager spectators, the lists will be kept open, and the tournament continually renewed.

In the reciprocal influence of the language and the literature of a nation, the language, no doubt, gives much more than it receives. While it grows by the increased fulness and activity of the nation's thought, the ease and rapidity of its growth are modified by its organic laws and affinities, and the language, as it exists at any given epoch, limits in every direction the thought of by far the larger proportion of even cultivated minds, while only a few have the skill and enterprise necessary to enlarge its capacities. The permanent, healthy, and graceful enrichment of a language must be from within, not from without,—by development, not by accretion. Foreign words are introduced with difficulty, adopted with suspicion, employed by writers with a certain degree of vagueness, and interpreted by readers with great indefiniteness and uncertainty. And this is the case, even when the language itself is heterogeneous in its sources and its idioms. Every language defines and circumscribes itself at its earliest epoch of literary activity ; and its character at that epoch determines for all subsequent time its wealth or its penury, its flexibility or its rigidity. Indeed, the languages that are derived from a diversity of sources, and

formed from the *débris* of extinct dialects, are the very ones which admit the least of enlargement and growth, because their roots are dead and buried in obscurity which only the antiquarian's spade can penetrate, and their inflections, arbitrary and traditional to every eye but that of the professed philologist, seem the exclusive property of the words to which custom already applies them. This is the case pre-eminently with the English tongue. We cannot define its laws, or give a reason for its forms, or count its anomalies. And yet we have exceedingly few living roots from which new scions can be raised ; and, when a word is adopted, there are so many modes of inflecting it, and so little reason for the preference of one over the other, that we commonly leave it uninflected, or retain its native forms of inflection, so that it never drops the *bar sinister* from its escutcheon, or receives the sanction of a fastidious purist. Thus there are many words, that have been floating within the purlieus of our language for a century or more, which are still *Italicized* in printing, and are admitted into the canon only by the most Catholic lexicographers.

In these respects, the German language is the opposite of ours. It is homogeneous in its structure, and probably bears an earlier date than any spoken language existing. Before it became fixed by a permanent literature, it had had ages of development among a people of genius, fervor, mental activity, and highly spiritual tendencies, so that its vocabulary had become rich in words denoting, not only the objects of common life, but the moods and shades of sentiment, emotion, and inward experience. Its radical forms are easily traced, and capable of an indefinite variety of modifications. Its inflections are numerous, significant, such as readily lend themselves to the naturalization of foreign words, and much more to the clothing of new derivatives from its own roots. It abounds in qualifying prefixes and suffixes, which enlarge or limit the sense of a word with almost mathematical exactness. It admits of an inconceivable variety of compounds, and thus adapts itself to the succinct expression of the most complex ideas. It is therefore peculiarly fitted for philosophical speculation, for the delineation of the inward life, and for the embodiment of all the finer tracery of thought and feeling, — of those moods of mind which we are apt to call vague and evanescent,

because they flit from the mind before they can find meet expression in our less copious and flexible tongue. It gives form and name to the nicest discriminations and the most shadowy glimmerings of ideas. The possession of an instrument of such micrometric delicacy and precision could not fail to cherish the close and minute analysis of thought and feeling, and the reduction of all the forms of inward experience to their constituent elements. And in these characteristics German literature stands unapproached. In its master-works, it is preëminently graphic of the inward life, dealing with the secret things of the human soul and the spiritual world as the chemist does with the salts and acids in his laboratory. In its baser forms, it still handles the tests, solvents, and equivalents of intellectual analysis, and often plays with them juggles of amazing dexterity and of the most imposing verisimilitude.

The peculiarities of the German language to which we have referred will account at once for the light in which German literature is regarded in other countries, and for the position which Germany occupies with regard to the whole literary world beside. The German scholar is cosmopolitan in his knowledge, taste, and appreciation. Shakspeare is as his household god. The French and Spanish, the Russian and Polish classics, lie as distinctly within his knowledge as Homer and Virgil. He is more familiar with each last new phasis of the Protean genius of the New World than our own critics are. He literally says "to the North, Give up, and to the South, Keep not back." On the other hand, everywhere out of Germany, German genius shines from beneath a penumbra, rests under the stigma of obscurity, and is charged with giving unintelligible expression to ideas not sufficiently definite to its own apprehension to admit of clear statement. Are not all these phenomena to be traced to the two obvious laws, that the less copious language can always be transfused into the more affluent, and the latter can never be adequately translated into the former? The German finds in no language forms of speech for which his mother tongue fails to furnish a precise synonyme. The Frenchman or the Anglo-Saxon finds in almost every German author words for which his own language furnishes no perfect counterpart, shades of signification which it cannot express, inflections alien from its idiom; and, as he thinks in his own

language, what is perfectly intelligible to a German reader may convey to him only a partial and vague idea. This consideration should make us diffident in our criticisms of what seems obscure in German literature. What we fully understand is fairly open for our animadversion. Manifest inconsistencies and absurdities, false logic, fallacious rhetoric, it is our right to detect, expose, and condemn. But until we can think in German, and are conscious of a native German's clear apprehension of the wealth and power of his own tongue, there is always reason to suspect that the alleged obscurity may have its seat in our own ignorance, and not in the printed page. In the visible universe, if there be arrangements the use of which we cannot discern, we infer their beneficent purpose from the fact, that the traces of a merciful design are coextensive with our knowledge of creation. By parity of reason, (if we may compare human things with divine,) when all that we can clearly understand of an author, with whose language our most thorough acquaintance must fall very far below his, commends itself to our taste and judgment, we are bound to infer that he has not stultified himself or wantonly mystified his readers, but that there is aptness, wisdom, and truth where our power of appreciation fails.

In the work before us, Mr. Hedge undertook a task of the utmost difficulty; and the difficulty lay, not in the selection, but in the exclusion, both of authors and extracts. The critic who tests the work by his own taste can hardly fail to complain of the omission of favorite authors and passages. But if it be asked, whether any thing unworthy of its place among specimens of standard literature has been inserted, we must answer, with perhaps a few slight exceptions, in the negative. Of the German prose-writers filling an unchallenged place among the *dii majorum gentium* we miss none. Of "third-rate" authors we find none. Of those who occupy a secondary place there are representatives of every class and every marked epoch, and they are generally men who may be fairly assumed as types of their kind or times. The authors from whom Mr. Hedge has given us extracts are twenty-eight in number, and cover a period of more than three centuries, from Martin Luther to Chamisso. The selections from each writer are preceded by a brief sketch of his life, character, and writings. These abridged biog-

raphies are not mere records of facts, but discriminating, and often admiring and enthusiastic delineations. Their value is greatly enhanced by free quotations from the eulogies of personal friends and admirers, and from the criticisms of those who had made the genius of the subject of the sketch their peculiar study. Though these memoirs were entirely secondary in their design, they are so comprehensive and symmetrical in arrangement, so perfectly elaborated and yet so unartificial in style, and leave the outlines of each author's character and life-experience so distinctly traced on the reader's mind, that they alone would have constituted a successful and a highly popular and instructive volume.

We can find nothing to blame, and much to approve, in the proportions of the work. It was designed for a large, but not a miscellaneous, public. The idea of making the book attractive to readers of all classes was, of course, out of the question ; and it contains just that alternation of the grave and the gay, of reason, wit, and fancy, of theology, philosophy, criticism, and romance, which is best adapted to give an educated American some idea of the range and scope, and some antepast of the beauties, of German literature, and to direct his further pursuit of the same literature with the aid of translator or compiler. In this point of view, we cannot regard the portion of the work assigned to the intellectual philosophy of the past and present age as excessive. The writers quoted are objects of general curiosity and interest, and yet but a small portion of our literary men have access to their works. We are particularly glad of the rich specimens of criticism, a science for which the German mind is especially fitted by nature and by discipline ; and, more than all, we have been happy to make our first acquaintance with Mendelssohn, the Christian-hearted Jew, through that incomparable essay "On the Sublime and the Naïve in Polite Literature."

Translation is commonly deemed an easy work ; and many are the dolts, too self-conscious of doltship to venture before the public under their own names, who regard themselves as qualified translators, on the score of a good grammar and dictionary knowledge of some foreign tongue. But a faithful and successful version can be made only by the mind that can take full cognizance of the subject-matter of the work translated, and the pen that could sustain its own independ-

ent reputation. A man can translate only what, under altered circumstances, he might have written ; and between the version made by a man of taste and genius, and that wrought to order by a bookseller's serf, there is as much and as discernible a difference as there is between Childe Harold and the Poet's Corner filled by a Yankee verse-wright. Most of the translations in this volume were made by Mr. Hedge himself, and are all that might have been expected from his previous well-earned reputation as a scholar and a writer. For a few of the pieces he was indebted to friends occupying the same plane of mental attainment and vision with himself ; and their contributions are of kindred merit with his own. A few more are extracted from published translations of the entire works of which they form a part. All are fine specimens of translations, — versions, not paraphrases, — and in good vernacular English, not in English words hampered with German idioms and wound up into German sentences.

While we are discussing the merits of the work, we ought not to forget the meed of praise due the printer and publisher. A handsomer volume has seldom been issued from the American press. In paper, type, margin, in the whole and in each separate detail (except that some of the proofs seem to have been slighted), it is all that could be desired. Its embellishments are so, not in name merely, but in fact. The title-page is adorned with a graceful emblematic design, representing, as we are informed on high authority, the "triumph of letters over barbarian force." The portraits are engraved with great distinctness of outline and delicacy of expression, and with an exquisite softness of finish, which reminds us of some of the choicest specimens of miniature painting.

The volume commences with extracts from Luther, principally from his Epistles, which furnish the most favorable view of his talents as a prose-writer ; for, with a power of diction which has rendered his translation of the Scriptures a decisive epoch in the history of the language, he was too impulsive and too excursive for sustained beauty and eloquence. Of aphoristic paragraphs, there might be cited from his works many of unequalled piquancy, humor, brilliancy, grandeur, or pathos ; but they are often imbedded where the resolute literary adventurer alone will enucleate them. As a man of genius, he impresses us the most strongly in those noble lyrics of his, which, perfect in rhythmical

finish, and crowded to their utmost capacity with spirit-stirring sentiment, rush on with a torrent of melody both for the ear and for the soul, and at intervals fall upon the sense and thought like the booming of a cataract.

Among the extracts from Lessing, we are glad to find the greater part of his essay on "The Education of the Human Race," — a treatise designed to illustrate the intrinsic aptness of the means employed by the Almighty (according to the sacred narrative) for the early training of the human family. We quote a portion, and wish that we had room for the whole.

"What education is to the individual, revelation is to the whole human race.

"Education is a revelation which is made to the individual; and revelation is an education which has taken place and is still taking place with the whole human race.

"Whether any advantage may accrue to the science of education by considering education from this point of view, I shall not here inquire. But, unquestionably, it may be of great use in theology, and may help to resolve many difficulties, to regard revelation as an education of the human race.

"Education gives man nothing which he might not have had from himself; it only gives him that, which he might have had from himself, more rapidly and more easily. So, too, revelation gives mankind nothing which the human reason, left to itself, might not also have attained to; but it gave them and gives them what is most important, sooner.

"And as, in education, it is not a matter of indifference in what order the faculties of man are unfolded, as education cannot communicate all things at once, — even so God, in his revelation, has found it necessary to observe a certain order, a certain measure.

"Although the first man had been furnished, at the outset, with the notion of an only God, yet this notion, being not an acquired, but an imparted one, could not possibly continue, in its purity, for any length of time. As soon as human reason, left to itself, began to work upon it, it separated the one Immeasurable into several Immeasurables, and gave to each of these parts its own peculiar characteristic.

"Thus arose, in a natural way, polytheism and idolatry. And who knows how many million years human reason might have wandered about in these aberrations, notwithstanding, everywhere and at all times, individual men perceived that they were aberrations, had it not pleased God, by a new impulse, to give it a better direction?

"But since he could not and would not reveal himself again to each individual, he selected a single nation for his special training: and that the most rude and savage of all, in order to begin with them from the foundation.

"This was the Israelitish nation, concerning which it is not even known what kind of worship they had in Egypt. For slaves so degraded as they were were not allowed to take part in the worship of the Egyptians; and the God of their fathers had become wholly unknown to them.

"Perhaps the Egyptians had expressly forbidden them any god or gods, had taught them to believe that they had no god or gods, that to have a god or gods was a prerogative of the superior Egyptians. Perhaps they had taught them this in order to tyrannize over them with the greater show of justice. Do not Christians at the present day pursue very much the same course with their slaves?

"To this rude people, therefore, God caused himself at first to be proclaimed as the God of their fathers, in order first to familiarize them with the idea, that they, too, had a God of their own.

"By means of the miracles with which he brought them out of Egypt, he proved himself, in the next place, a God who was mightier than all other gods. And while he continued to manifest himself as the mightiest of all, a distinction which only one can possess, he accustomed them gradually to the notion of an only God.

"But how far was this conception of an only God below the true transcendental idea of unity, which reason, so long afterward, learned to deduce with certainty from the idea of infinity!

"The nation was very far from being able to raise itself to the true conception of the One, although the more enlightened among the people had already approximated more or less nearly to this idea. And this was the true and only cause why they so often forsook their own, and thought to find the only, that is, the most powerful God, in some other divinity, of another nation.

"But what kind of moral training was possible for a nation so rude, so unskilled in abstract thought, so completely in its childhood? Only such a one as corresponds with the period of childhood; an education by means of immediate sensual rewards and punishments.

"So here, again, education and revelation coincide. As yet, God could give his people no other religion and no other law than one by the keeping or transgressing of which they might hope to be happy, or fear to be wretched, here on earth. For, as yet,

their thoughts extended no further than the present life. They knew of no immortality of the soul; they longed for no future state of being. To have revealed to them those things to which their reason as yet was so little adequate, what else would this have been, on the part of God, but to commit the fault of the vain pedagogue, who would rather urge his pupil forward and make a display of his proficiency, than instruct him thoroughly?" — pp. 91, 92.

A larger space is assigned to Goethe than to any other author. This was, indeed, due on the score of the versatility of his genius, the vast quantity and variety of his writings, and his actual position, whether rightful or not, as the acknowledged literary sovereign of Germany. We confess that we find it hard to hold our censor in the crowd of Goethe's incense-burners; and yet, with increased conversance with his works, we are more and more ready to own that he was the most accomplished man of his age, whether we take into the account the extent of his knowledge, the range of his observation, his insight into the springs of action and the sources of character, his mastery of the resources of language and style, or his unbounded command of appropriate materials for almost every conceivable form of literary labor. Yet he has exceedingly little power over our emotional nature. In reading him, we never find our critical judgment set aside by spontaneous admiration. And he seems to us rather a huge, complex, and many voiced or penned intellectual machine, than a man of like passions with ourselves. He appears to have committed moral suicide, — to have torn out his heart in his very boyhood; for the youth who (to say nothing of other similar, yet less atrocious transactions) could wantonly win the affection of so pure and beautiful a being as Frederica of Gessenheim, only to fling it from him with disdain, the man who, in his *Autobiography*, could tell the scandalous story without a remorseful or even a regretful word, is an unsolvable enigma, if we suppose his moral nature unmutilated. Yet no man had a keener intellectual perception of the Right than he, and we are inclined fully to accord with Mr. Hedge's estimate of his character and offices as a moral teacher, which we are glad to quote as a rich *morceau* of discriminating criticism.

"His power, as a moral teacher, is not so generally understood and acknowledged as the other qualities which have been

mentioned. Yet there are some by whom it is more strongly asserted and more deeply felt than all the other excellences which have been claimed for him. There are some who profess to have derived from him their strongest moral impressions, and who maintain that, as a teacher of moral truth, he has been more to them than any other, than all other writers. Nor will this seem strange, if we consider what constitutes an effective moralist, or what it is that gives force to the statement of moral truth. It is not enthusiasm, or fine sentiment, or declamation, but the clear intuition, the veritable experience, the unbiased sincerity of a free and commanding mind. A character distinguished for moral worth is not necessary for this purpose, nor great activity of religious sentiment. The saint may instruct us better than all books by his life, but not necessarily — because he is a saint — by his writings. There may be great moral worth and a great deal of religious sentiment without that *intellectual sincerity* which brings us into immediate contact with the truth, and the want of which will vitiate the strongest statement. This sincerity of the intellect is something very different from conscientiousness. It is seemingly independent of any moral quality except the single one of courage. It is the rarest attribute in literature. It does not readily combine with natures in which sentiment predominates. It indicates rather a predominance of the intellectual. Only once in the tide of time was the highest degree of it found united with the highest degree of moral purity and religious faith. It is the quality most essential in the communication of moral, as of all other truth.

“ We are apt to deceive ourselves as to the moral value of certain impressions derived from books. We mistake the transient excitation of the nobler sentiments produced by eloquent declamation or by the exhibition of romantic excellence in works of fiction, — by such characters, for instance, as the Marquis of Posa in *Don Carlos*, — for a genuine renewal of the moral man. We think we are burnt clean by the temporary glow into which we are thrown. The nature of such excitement differs but little from that produced by alcoholic stimulants, amid animated discussion and congenial friends. It is stimulus without nourishment, ebullition without growth. It has something maudlin. It acts chiefly on the nerves. Its final effect is rather to enervate than to educate the soul. He only instructs who gives me light, who effects a permanent lodgment, in the mind, of some essential truth. The effective moralist is not the enthusiast, but the impartial and clear-seeing witness; not he who declaims most eloquently about the truth, but he who makes me see it, who gives me a clear intuition of a moral fact.

“Goethe was peculiarly fitted, by habit and endowment, to be a witness of the truth, so far as truth is a matter of intellectual discernment. Not over-scrupulous in his way of life, he practised the most scrupulous fidelity to himself, as a seeker of the truth. He gave no license to his mind. Where he could not or would not perform, he would know. He wanted not courage nor candor to see truly in morals and religion as in every thing else. He loved sensual indulgence right well, but he loved truth more. A man of sincerest intellect, who suffered neither fear nor hope, nor prepossession of any kind, to come between him and the light; with whom to see was the first necessity of his nature; to state distinctly to himself and others what he saw, the next.

“Unquestionably, he was no saint. His wildest admirers have sought no place for him in the Christian Calendar, though greater sinners than he may be found in it and among its most honored names. But neither was he a bad man in any allowable sense of the word, as every one must know who considers the moral conditions on which alone true poetry is possible. Wherein he transgressed the social law and the Christian standard, let judgment be pronounced without fear or favor. But for every count on which verdict is given, let irrefragable testimony be required. Let not the hero of his time, a hero of the true sort, — one who labored through life, with whatever judgment or success, to build up and not to destroy, to lead Humanity onward to the prize of beauty through the knowledge of the truth, — let not such a one be surrendered to the scourge of the tongue on grounds of hearsay and fallible inference. Let not a great and illustrious name be ruthlessly tossed to the dogs and to all the birds. If the good and evil of his life, the positive and the negative, were fairly weighed in the balance together, the result would probably indicate a higher grade of moral excellence than most of his accusers have attained to. It is not, however, on the moral character of the man that any safe judgment as to the moral character of his writings can be based. Grant him immoral; — still his testimony to moral truth, if sincere, (and no one versed in his writings can doubt his sincerity,) may be all the more impressive on that account. It is the testimony of one who was biased by no prepossessions in favor of that to which he testifies, who took nothing for granted, believed nothing because it was the general conviction, said nothing because it was expected, who would neither deceive himself nor be deceived by others. It is the testimony of one who had seen with his own eyes, and those eyes the keenest, the most unprejudiced, that ever sought to penetrate the relations of things, — who had experienced with his own heart, and that heart one to which all experiences were

familiar, which gave itself up without reserve to all the discipline of life, which had proved all things and knew and confessed what was good.

"In reading Goethe, we do not feel, as when reading Dante or Milton, that we are conversing with a pure and lofty spirit; but we do feel that we are conversing with a competent witness, or better still, with an incorruptible judge. The verdict which he will give is a part of his life. It is a fact in Nature. The fault which most readers find with his writings is want of heat. He betrays no passionate interest in any subject, in any character, and seeks to excite none in his readers. To stir the blood is not his aim. Intense emotion he purposely avoids, as incompatible with the higher purposes of art. There is no gush, no rush, no pouring forth of a full soul, excepting in his lyric poems. But what he wants in enthusiasm he makes up in sincerity and precision. If there is no declamation, there is also no cant, no straining, nothing said for effect. Therefore his words have weight. They drop like the oracles of destiny from his pen. When he states, with characteristic calmness, that 'only with renunciation can life, properly speaking, be said to begin'; that saying, though it does but repeat in substance what we had always been told, has all the freshness of an original discovery. This sincere word, wrung from the experience of such a mind, carries with it a deeper conviction than all the arguments and all the declamation that have ever been employed to enforce the duty of self-denial." — pp. 267, 268.

We should have been glad, had Mr. Hedge quoted more largely from Jean Paul, whose genial, loving, exuberant spirit disarms criticism, and attracts towards himself the very class of emotions of which Goethe can never be the object. The following "Dream" is doubtless already familiar to many of our readers in Carlyle's Translation; but as it seems to us to be almost unparalleled in awful grandeur of conception, and in sustained magnificence of style, we copy it for the benefit of those who may not have seen it elsewhere. Richter begins by saying, — "The object of this composition must serve as the excuse for its boldness."

"Once, on a summer evening, I lay upon a mountain in the sunshine, and fell asleep; and I dreamt that I awoke in the churchyard, having been roused by the rattling wheels of the tower-clock, which struck eleven. I looked for the sun in the void night-heaven; for I thought that it was eclipsed by the moon. All the graves were unclosed, and the iron doors of the charnel-house were opened and shut by invisible hands. Shadows cast

by no one flitted along the walls, and other shadows stalked erect in the free air. No one slept any longer in the open coffins but the children. A gray, sultry fog hung suspended in heavy folds in the heavens, and a gigantic shadow drew it in like a net, ever nearer, and closer, and hotter. Above me I heard the distant fall of avalanches; beneath me, the earnest step of an immeasurable earthquake. The church was heaved up and down by two incessant discords, which struggled with one another, and in vain sought to unite in harmony. Sometimes a gray glimmer flared up on the windows, and, molten by the glimmer, the iron and lead ran down in streams. The net of fog and the reeling earth drove me into the temple, at the door of which brooded two basilisks with twinkling eyes in two poisonous nests. I passed through unknown shadows, on whom were impressed all the centuries of years. The shadows stood congregated round the altar; and in all, the breast throbbed and trembled in the place of a heart. One corpse alone, which had just been buried in the church, lay still upon its pillow, and its breast heaved not, while upon its smiling countenance lay a happy dream; but on the entrance of one of the living, he awoke, and smiled no more. He opened his closed eyelids with a painful effort, but within there was no eye; and in the sleeping bosom, instead of a heart, there was a wound. He lifted up his hands, and folded them in prayer; but the arms lengthened out and detached themselves from the body, and the folded hands fell down apart. Aloft, on the church-dome, stood the dial-plate of Eternity; but there was no figure visible upon it, and it was its own index; only a black figure pointed to it, and the dead wished to read the time upon it.

"A lofty, noble form, having the expression of a never-ending sorrow, now sank down from above upon the altar, and all the dead exclaimed,—'Christ! is there no God?' And he answered,—'There is none!' The whole shadow of each dead one, and not the breast alone, now trembled, and one after another was severed by the trembling.

"Christ continued:—'I traversed the worlds, I ascended into the suns, and flew with the milky ways through the wildernesses of the heavens; but there is no God! I descended as far as Being throws its shadow, and gazed down into the abyss, and cried aloud,—'Father, where art thou?' but I heard nothing but the eternal storm which no one rules; and the beaming rainbow in the west hung, without a creating sun, above the abyss, and fell down in drops; and when I looked up to the immeasurable world for the Divine Eye, it glared upon me from an empty, bottomless socket, and Eternity lay brooding upon Chaos, and gnawed it, and ruminated it. Cry on, ye discords! cleave the shadows with your cries; for He is not!'

"The shadows grew pale and melted, as the white vapor formed by the frost melts and becomes a warm breath, and all was void. Then there arose and came into the temple — a terrible sight for the heart — the dead children who had awakened in the church-yard, and they cast themselves before the lofty form upon the altar, and said, 'Jesus! have we no Father?' and he answered with streaming eyes, 'We are all orphans, I and you; we are without a Father.'

"Thereupon the discords shrieked more harshly; the trembling walls of the temple split asunder, and the temple and the children sunk down, and the earth and the sun followed, and the whole immeasurable universe fell rushing past us; and aloft upon the summit of infinite Nature stood Christ, and gazed down into the universe, checkered with thousands of suns, as into a mine dug out of the Eternal Night, wherein the suns are the miners' lamps, and the milky ways the veins of silver.

"And when Christ beheld the grinding concourse of worlds, the torch-dances of the heavenly *ignes fatui*, and the coral-banks of beating hearts; and when he beheld how one sphere after another poured out its gleaming souls into the sea of death, as a drop of water strews gleaming lights upon the waves, sublime as the loftiest finite being, he lifted up his eyes to the Nothingness, and to the empty Immensity, and said, — 'Frozen, dumb Nothingness! cold, eternal Necessity! insane Chance! know ye what is beneath you? When will ye destroy the building and me? Chance! knowest thou thyself when with hurricanes thou wilt march through the snow-storm of stars and extinguish one sun after the other, and when the sparkling dew of the constellations shall cease to glisten as thou passest by? How lonely is every one in the wide charnel of the universe! I alone am in company with myself. O Father! O Father! where is thine infinite bosom, that I may be at rest? Alas! if every being is its own father and creator, why cannot it also be its own destroying angel? Is that a man near me? Thou poor one! thy little life is the sigh of Nature, or only its echo. A concave mirror throws its beams upon the dust-clouds composed of the ashes of the dead upon your earth, and thus ye exist, cloudy, tottering images! Look down into the abyss over which clouds of ashes are floating by. Fogs full of worlds arise out of the sea of death. The future is a rising vapor, the present a falling one. Knowest thou thy earth?' Here Christ looked down, and his eyes filled with tears, and he said, — 'Alas! I, too, was once like you: then I was happy, for I had still my infinite Father, and still gazed joyfully from the mountains into the infinite expanse of heaven; and I pressed my wounded heart on his soothing image, and said, even in the bit-

terness of death, "Father, take thy Son out of his bleeding shell, and lift him up to thy heart." Ah, ye too, too happy dwellers of earth, ye still believe in him. Perhaps at this moment your sun is setting, and ye fall, amid blossoms, radiance, and tears, upon your knees, and lift up your blessed hands, and call out to the open heaven, amid a thousand tears of joy, "Thou knowest me too, thou infinite One, and all my wounds, and thou wilt welcome me after death, and wilt close them all." Ye wretched ones! after death they will not be closed. When the man of sorrows stretches his sore wounded back upon the earth to slumber towards a lovelier morning, full of truth, full of virtue and of joy, behold, he awakes in the tempestuous chaos, in the everlasting midnight, and no morning cometh, and no healing hand, and no infinite Father! Mortal who art near me, if thou still livest, worship him, or thou hast lost him for ever!'

"And as I fell down and gazed into the gleaming fabric of worlds, I beheld the raised rings of the giant serpent of eternity, which had couched itself round the universe of worlds, and the rings fell, and she enfolded the universe doubly. Then she wound herself in a thousand folds round Nature, and crushed the worlds together, and, grinding them, she squeezed the infinite temple into one church-yard church,—and all became narrow, dark, and fearful, and a bell-hammer stretched out to infinity was about to strike the last hour of Time, and split the universe asunder, — when I awoke.

"My soul wept for joy, that it could again worship God; and the joy, and the tears, and the belief in him were the prayer. And when I arose, the sun gleamed deeply behind the full purple ears of corn, and peacefully threw the reflection of its evening blushes on the little moon, which was rising in the east without an aurora. And between the heaven and the earth a glad fleeting world stretched out its short wings, and lived like myself in the presence of the infinite Father, and from all nature around me flowed sweet, peaceful tones, as from evening bells."—pp. 416, 417.

There is no need of our going farther in our catalogue of writers, or attempting to abridge for our readers Mr. Hedge's table of contents. We trust that we may induce some of them, at least, to consult it for themselves. There is no book accessible to the English or American reader which can furnish so comprehensive and symmetrical a view of German literature to the uninitiated; and those already conversant with some of the German classics will find here valuable and edifying extracts from works to which very few in this country can gain access.